

MEETING MINUTES
Finance Committee
Wednesday, May 18, 2011

CALL TO ORDER

Time – 7:00 P.M.

Members in attendance: Chairman Joanne F. Marden, Mary O'Donoghue, Cindy Milne, S. Jon Stumpf, Peggy Kruse and Greg Rigby.

Also present: Finance Director Anthony Torrisi, School Committee Chair Dennis Forgue.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Greg Rigby moved and Mary O'Donoghue seconded to recommend approval of the following minutes as written:

December 13, 2011

February 9, 2011

February 15, 2011

February 16, 2011

February 23, 2011

February 28, 2011

March 2, 2011

March 7, 2011

March 9, 2011

March 25, 2011

March 21, 2011

March 23, 2011

March 28, 2011

April 14, 2011

April 20, 2011

The motion passed unanimously 6-0.

Greg Rigby moved and Mary O'Donoghue seconded to recommend approval of the minutes dated January 19, 2011 with changes. The motion passed unanimously 6-0.

LIAISON REPORTS & BUDGET DISCUSSION

Mr. Stumpf told Committee members the reason he thought Town Meeting went so smoothly was primarily due to the sharing of information between School and Town departments. In addition, he stated there was consensus among School Committee members to improve efficiency of the numerous budget meetings prior to Town Meeting. Lengthy discussion followed regarding whether or not budget discussions could be discussed as early as late summer in preparation for Town Meeting. Mr. Stumpf suggested holding early budget discussions using assumption numbers. However, Ms. Marden responded she thought current growth numbers would be necessary for more accurate budget forecasting. She added those numbers would not be available until mid October into November.

Mr. Rigby suggested restructuring the budget process by beginning with Expenses rather than with Revenues. Discussion followed.

Ms. Kruse suggested discussing the SPED Budget early in the process. Mr. Forgue noted this issue was scheduled for discussion among School Committee members and added Lexington had an interesting model for Out-of-District costs using a Stabilization Fund. He stated the School Committee would share this information with the Finance Committee at a later date. There was consensus among Committee members that budget discussions could be held earlier in the process for educational and informational purposes only.

Mr. Torrasi offered four suggestions as the most significant revenue numbers the Committee should be discussing early in the budget process: Growth Assumption numbers, State Aid, Circuit Breaker and CIP funding. With regard to expenditures, Mr. Torrasi noted the Town's wage structure number as the most important. However, he added this number would most likely not be available early in the process.

Ms. Milne suggested scheduling all Budget presentations on one Saturday rather than at numerous meetings throughout several weeks. Ms. Marden stated there had been problems with holding Saturday meetings in the past. Other issues regarding Town Meeting that were briefly discussed included the need for some sort of mechanism to get the attention of the Moderator during Town Meeting and logistics such as speaker and video screen placement. Mr. Torrasi told Committee members the Town Manager and Town Clerk would speak to the Moderator regarding these issues.

TOWN YARD TASK FORCE UPDATE

Ms. Kruse reported four proposals had been submitted for the new Town Yard project including the following sites: Campanelli Drive, Route 133 at the Tewksbury border, Brockway Smith and 160 Dascomb Road. Ms. Kruse asked for input from Committee members regarding their thoughts on a timetable for a Town Yard Task Force presentation. The Committee's response was in the Spring. Additionally, Ms. Kruse asked if they thought the current downtown site should be replaced. Committee members expressed frustration with Ms. Kruse's question and stated it was their belief that it is the role of the Finance Committee to provide guidance on the financials of a project rather than on specific plan options. Discussion followed. Concerns were raised regarding the proposed sites and to what extent DPW and Plant & Facilities management are involved in the planning stages of the project. There was consensus among Committee members that new DPW and Plant & Facilities Directors should be hired before the Task Force proceeds further with the plan.

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, June 29, 2011
2nd Floor Conference Room
7:00 P.M.

Wednesday, July 13, 2011
2nd Floor Conference Room
7:00 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT – 9:45 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carolyn Lynch
Recording Secretary